



Class LB 41

Book . A39

Title _____

Imprint _____
/ _____

AN ADDRESS

ON

POPULAR EDUCATION,

DELIVERED AT THE FIRST ANNIVERSARY

OF THE

PENNINGTON MALE SEMINARY,

PENNINGTON, NEW-JERSEY,

JULY 21st, 1841.

BY WILLIAM H. ALLEN, A. M.

PROFESSOR OF CHEMISTRY AND NATURAL PHILOSOPHY IN
DICKINSON COLLEGE.

TRENTON.
JUSTICE & MILLS,
Printers.
1841.

RESOLVED, UNANIMOUSLY, That the thanks of the Visiting Committee and Board of Trustees, of the Pennington Male Seminary, be given to Professor ALLEN, for the able and eloquent Address delivered by him, on the 21st of July; and that he be requested to furnish a copy for publication.

The Committee tender to Professor ALLEN their profound respect.

ABSALOM BLACHLY, }
HENRY P. WELLING, } Committee.

036101
25043

GENTLEMEN:

The Address, which you have been pleased to notice in so partial and friendly a manner, is at your disposal.

Be pleased, gentlemen, to accept for yourselves and for those whom you represent, assurances of the cordial esteem and respect of

Your obedient servant,

W. H. ALLEN.

To Messrs. ABSALOM BLACHLY, }
HENRY P. WELLING, } Committee.

LB41
A 39

W 9 N 43

GENTLEMEN OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES
AND VISITING COMMITTEE—

At this first anniversary of the Pennington Male Seminary, it is fit that you and the friends and teachers of the Institution, here present, should feel an honest exultation in witnessing the auspicious results of your efforts and labors. Nothing great or useful has ever been accomplished without toil and sacrifice; and the establishment and organization of a Seminary of learning, even in the most favorable circumstances, are no exception to this general remark. Its projectors must possess the wisdom to devise, and the energy to execute — the sagacity to foresee difficulties, the courage to meet them, and the perseverance to overcome them — the tact to remove prejudice and conciliate friendship, and the skill to baffle opposition, and disarm hostility. Money must be had; and in the midst of public bankruptcy and private distress, the collection of funds requisite to place an Institution of learning on a secure basis, and in an efficient state, is not among the least of the embarrassments which attend the enterprise. Teachers must be had; and when so many employments more congenial to most minds, and offering more ample pecuniary rewards, are inviting the talents of the country, it is not always easy to command the services of enterprising, active and competent men. All these difficulties you have encountered, these obstacles you have overcome; and here, with the fruits of your labors before you and around you; a substantial edifice in which to conduct your operations; able instructors who know their duties, and delight to perform them; a goodly number of youthful students who have given, in an interesting and well-sustained examination, convincing proofs of their own ability and industry, and of the zeal and faithfulness of their preceptors; — in the midst of these evidences of your success, allow me to congratulate you, that through your instrumentality, a Seminary of learning has been established here, which is destined to become an ornament to your State, and a blessing to the community.

I know not how I could discharge my duty to you, and to the

audience assembled on this occasion, in a more appropriate manner, than by offering some thoughts on the diffusive tendency of education in our country, and on the social and political advantages of an elevated standard of popular instruction.

By education, I do not mean that knowledge exclusively which is acquired at school, but that training of the intellectual and moral powers, wheresoever and howsoever obtained, which refines a man's tastes, enlarges his views, elevates his ideas, and enables him to think consecutively, reason correctly, and act properly, in the affairs and conduct of life. In this sense of the word, a man may have an excellent education, though he may never have been at school; and a very defective education, though he may have graduated at college. By study, and by study alone, can a good education be acquired. It would be absurd, however, to infer that schools are useless, because it is possible for a man to educate himself without them. As well might you destroy your rail roads, because men can travel without *them*. Schools are facilities for travelling on the highway of knowledge, and the more rapid, cheap, and easy the conveyance, the more numerous will be the passengers.

The United States have not, like France, Holland, and Prussia, a national system of instruction; and the State governments have done little more than establish and support primary schools. Liberal appropriations have indeed occasionally been made for the endowment of Academies and Colleges; but those institutions are not usually under the direction of the State authorities, but are controlled by boards possessing corporate powers. No State has a uniform and well-arranged system of public instruction, controlled in all its departments by the public authority. This, which at first view appears so defective in our State policy, is doubtless more in accordance with our ideas of liberty, and with the genius of our institutions, than the systems which prevail in Europe. In Prussia, every child from seven to fourteen years of age, is compelled by law to attend the public schools. In this country men are so jealous of their freedom, they do not like to be driven to promote even their own interests. Many a citizen of this Republic would deem it a serious invasion of his inalienable rights, were he obliged to send his children to a certain school, or, indeed, to any school. In Prussia, the schools are a part of the government, and the teachers, of every grade, from the heads of the Universities downward, are officers of the government, appointed by the public authority, responsible to it, removable by it, and paid from the public treasury. It is obvious that such a system, wielded with energy by a stable and despotic monarchy, and constantly directed to the support of

the government, and the maintenance of the existing order of things, would lose its efficiency in the conflicts of opinion and the triumph and defeat of parties, which incessantly agitate our country. Who among us would desire to see our schools the engines of political strife, and our teachers the brawlers of a dominant faction, to be rewarded while it holds the power, and displaced at its fall. In Prussia, the government directs, through the censors of the press, what works shall be published; and through the ministers of public instruction, what books shall be used in the schools. It is needless to say that in this country, the minority would never submit to have doctrines, which they abhor, as injurious, false and wicked, instilled into the minds of their children by the power of an unscrupulous and transient majority.

Where then are we to look for that active, diffusive principle, under whose operation Seminaries, and Colleges, and Universities are springing into life in every section of our country? How comes it that here, unsustained by the patronage and power of government, the means of acquiring a better education than the elementary schools can furnish, are placed within the reach of almost every youth of the Republic who desires to use them? The solution of this question is to be found in that spirit of combination, to which various and adverse religious opinions here give birth. I am aware that the word, *sectarianism*, is alarming to some, odious to others. In the minds of many, it is synonymous with all that is selfish in purpose, malignant in spirit, vindictive in action. Such men take narrow views. Blind to the great good, they grow pale and shudder at the little evil, which their diseased optics have magnified. They forget, that in the present order of the Divine government, good and evil are always associated; that it is often impossible to distinguish the true from the apparent; and that, in the progress of human society, the greatest good has often sprung from seeming ill. The truth is, the sects are doing that to instruct and elevate the popular mind in this country, which government has never effected elsewhere, and which no other cause could have effected here. What possible combinations of men, on other than religious interests, could have shown such firmness of purpose, such union of effort, such economy of expense, and such energy of action, as have characterized those sects which have been foremost in the cause of education in this country?

When learning revived in Europe after the dark ages, the human mind, like a giant roused from slumber, conscious of its strength, and indignant at its long subjugation, exhibited the energy of a conqueror, though something of the ferocity of a savage. Time passed;

and the governments of Europe, observing that armed men were springing up to overthrow them, from the seeds which daring philosophers had scattered in the intellectual soil, prudently resolved to cultivate that soil for themselves; and if dragon's teeth must be sown, to enlist the earth-born warriors on their own side. Hence originated that alliance between government and learning, which is so close and strong in Germany; that union of school and state, which is a firmer bulwark to their institutions than all the cannon ever cast, than all the bayonets ever burnished. Just such an alliance, but for higher and nobler purposes, religion and learning are forming in the United States; and while every church looks to its schools as the nurseries of champions to step forth in its defence on the arena of controversy, the schools owe to the churches their power to disseminate knowledge, and make it accessible to the masses of the population. Each sect has had the sagacity to discover, that its influence on the next age will depend on the education of its youth in the present; and while each has its own schools, and manages them with a view to its own interests, no single system of doctrines in philosophy, politics, or religion, can so far gain ascendancy over all others, as to put in jeopardy the public good. A healthy activity of mind is kept alive by this clashing of rival opinions and interests; the spirit of investigation is developed, which, once awakened, extends itself ~~onward and onward~~ to every subject within the grasp of intellect; new combinations of beauty and utility spring from the effervescence and fermentation of discordant elements; and the national mind, quickened into motion by the force of a pervading and resistless attraction, leaps forward with strong impulse in the career of improvement.

Another advantage resulting from the union of schools and churches, and which tends to the diffusion of knowledge, is the cessation of hostilities between religion and philosophy. There was a time when the churchman regarded every philosopher as an infidel; and the philosopher, every churchman as a bigot. The church took alarm at the discoveries of science, lest they should overthrow its dogmas; and philosophy assailed the church as the most formidable enemy to the progress of truth. The sympathies of men being arrayed on the side of the church, science was retarded by the policy of the learned, and the prejudices of the ignorant. Mr. Whewell, in his *History of the Inductive Sciences*, relates that Augustin denied there are inhabitants on the opposite side of the earth, "because no such race is recorded in scripture among the descendants of Adam!" "When a certain philosopher was reported to Boniface, Archbishop of Mentz, as holding the existence of Anti-

podes, the Prelate was shocked by the assumption, as it seemed to him, of a world of human beings, out of the reach of the conditions of salvation; and application was made to the Pope for a censure of the holder of this dangerous doctrine."* Through dread of the denunciations of the Hierarchy, Copernicus did not publish his system of Astronomy till he came to his death-bed; and Gallileo was imprisoned in the Inquisition for believing that the earth moves round the sun, and not the sun round the earth. But men have now learned that "the same God who made the Bible made the world;" and that the truths of nature confirm those of revelation, with proofs too convincing to be resisted. Religion and knowledge, foes no longer, but confederated in an alliance, which mutual assistance continually strengthens, now work together for the same end—the welfare of mankind. Prejudice no longer drives men away from the open gates of science, but religion stands at her portals, and invites them to enter.

We may further observe the diffusive tendency of education in our Republic, by contrasting it with the exclusive systems of the ancients. Among the Egyptians, learning was confined to the priests and high functionaries of state, and the mysteries of science were shrouded from the people with scrupulous care, and an impenetrable veil. In Persia, only the sons of the best families were admitted to the public institutions. Among the Athenians, the most wise and acute people of antiquity, the philosophers kept the learning which they esteem most valuable, imprisoned in the schools which they established, a profound secret to the uninitiated. And while Poetry, Eloquence, Philosophy, and Art shed a glory over the Athenian name, and kindled a light which has shone upon the path of man even to our times, multitudes of the Athenian populace could neither read nor write. The reproof of Alexander of Macedon to his Tutor, is a good illustration of the exclusive spirit which prevailed among the learned of Greece. While the hero was pursuing his conquests in the east, Aristotle published his Physical Lectures. "You have not done well," thus writes to him Alexander, "You have not done well in publishing these lectures; for how shall we, your pupils, excel other men, if you make that public to all, which we have learned from you." No less characteristic of the age is the reply of the great preceptor: "My lectures are published and not published—they will be intelligible to those who heard them, and to none beside." Juvenal satirized the Roman populace for desiring only two things—"bread and games;" and perhaps the justice of the invective is a sufficient proof how low were the tastes,

* See History of the Inductive Sciences, vol. 1. p. 256.

how degrading the pleasures, and how defective the education of the masses of society at Rome. Yet these were the countrymen of Cicero, and Virgil, and Pliny, and Tacitus. During the middle ages, the cloister of the monk retained within its recesses the learning of antiquity; and while the secluded devotee guarded well the sacred flame which was one day to illumine the world, he took good heed that no ray of its light should escape beyond the walls of its prison.

With us, on the contrary, all that is known is published, and all who are willing to read, may learn and profit by it. Secrets are unpopular. The misers of knowledge are no longer permitted to lock up their treasures and brood over them, selfishly and alone. Our maxim is, he that hath aught to say or do, which can benefit man, let him say and do it; rewarded or unrewarded, let him not withhold; for what is one man's interest or ease, compared with the interests of the human race?

Again: let us mark the diffusive tendency of education in America, in contrast with what may be called the *centralizing* systems of modern Europe. In Russia, all art, and refinement, and wealth, and science are concentrated at St. Petersburg; and while the families of rank in that city enjoy every facility for instruction and improvement, the vast territories of the empire grope in Cimmerian darkness. The University of Berlin is the focus of light and intelligence in Prussia; and though other bright points scatter their rays over the kingdom, their light is obscured by the superior splendor of the great central luminary. In France, every thing gravitates towards Paris. Annihilate the capital, and if any France remained, it would be no such France as that which now excites the admiration of the world. In England, the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge are regarded as the great repositories of learning, the fountains of philosophy, the arbiters of letters, without whose seal and sanction new discoveries have no passport to notice, and merit no herald to fame.

The effect of all this, is to establish an aristocracy of learning, whose members guard the entrenchments which surround them with Argus vigilance, against the access of every intruder; and who lord it over the empire of mind with despotic sway.

But here, every section of the country has its own literary institution, which acknowledges no supremacy in others, no inferiority in itself. Here no great University claims to be the autocrat of the national mind; nor arrogates to itself the sole dispensation of literary honors; nor gathers around itself all the eminent scholars of the country. No central luminary eclipses all others by its over-

powering brightness; but a hundred radiant points, less intense indeed, but more genial and salutary, throw a uniform and cheerful light over every part of the land. The European system makes more profound scholars; ours, a greater number. The one elevates the *few* far above the heads of the *many*; the other exalts the *many* by raising *all* to a *higher level*. The one places the highest academical honors beyond the reach of the poor; the other, not only offers the prize to all who will make an effort to attain it, but also invites and encourages them to come up and take it. In Europe, who has ever heard of a penniless youth, without friends and without assistance, carving his own way to the honors of a University? In America, the thing is so common as hardly to attract attention. Need I tell you how, under our diffusive, economical, democratic system, the New England boy, without money, but with a fearless heart and a busy brain, works his way through college to stations of honor and influence? At the age of eighteen, he has received a good English education in the free schools. He desires more. Perhaps the undefined aspirations of conscious genius struggle in his soul. Having toiled during the summer at some manual labor, in autumn he repairs to an academy and qualifies himself to teach a common school during the winter. With the fifty dollars earned by his three months services, he returns to the academy, pays the expenses incurred in the fall, and resumes his studies. In the summer he goes to work again to pay for his spring quarter at the academy. Thus he continues alternately studying, and teaching, and working, till at the age of twenty-one, with fifty dollars in his pocket, he enters college. He can now teach schools of a higher grade, four months in each year, and keeping pace with his class by extra study, at the age of twenty-five he graduates with honor, two or three hundred dollars in debt. With ample experience in teaching, acquired by a long apprenticeship in the common schools, he is now employed as a tutor in the academy which seven years before he entered as a pupil. At the end of another year he is free from debt, and prepared to study any profession, or enter upon any career of life to which inclination or duty may lead. With a hardihood of frame, which youthful toil has produced; habits of economy, which poverty has made necessary; a self-reliance, which a series of successful efforts, originating with himself and directed by himself, has nourished; a spirit of enterprise, innate and indomitable, whose field is the world; a courage, that no obstacles can daunt; a fertility of resources, that no emergency can surprise; and a perseverance, that no labor can appal, he goes forth into the world "*to find, or to make a way.*" Can such a man fail? No—he cannot

fail. He knows himself; and trusting in God, and in the powers which God has given him, "he dares to do all that may become a man."

Let us now proceed to the second part of the proposed subject: the social and political advantages of an elevated standard of popular education. By popular education is meant, the education of those who toil with their hands, in distinction from that of those who toil with their heads. The latter is frequently called a *liberal* education, and perhaps the term is not misapplied, if we mean only to contrast it with the former, which, in truth, is *illiberal* enough. That will be a glorious day for our Republic, when the education of every man, whatever is to be his occupation, shall be liberal. The opinion extensively prevails, that the elements taught in the primary schools, are all that can be necessary or useful to the farmer and mechanic. The father who destines his son to succeed him on his farm or in his shop, fears to give him a thorough scientific education, lest the boy's head should be turned; lest he should become too lazy to work, and too proud for his business. But all observation teaches, that the more learned a man becomes, the less proud he is; and that the toil required to gain knowledge, is a poor nurse of indolence. It is the pretenders to learning, who are proud; and the ignorant, who are lazy. Besides, the respectability of an occupation depends not so much on itself, as on the character and intelligence of those who pursue it. There is no nobler employment than his, who tills the soil for the sustenance of the human race; no man is more useful than he who fabricates those articles, and executes those works, which conduce to the security, the convenience, and the comfort of his species. Let these classes of our citizens have but a good education, and they would instantly take their rightful position, in the highest ranks of influence, honor, and power.

But even admitting, what is by no means certain, that it is impossible for the laboring classes to be as well instructed as the professional, it by no means follows that their education should be neglected; and that no efforts should be made to improve it. There is more point than truth in the oft quoted couplet of Pope,

"A little learning is a dangerous thing,
Drink deep or taste not the Pierian spring."

If a little learning *is* dangerous, it is dangerous not because it is *learning*, but because it is *so little*. How much more dangerous then is no learning at all! Who would refuse a good thing, because he could not have as much of it as he desired? The wise man would say, if I cannot have all I would, I will take what I can.

Every step of advancement in learning is so much gain. Though a man may not hope to reach the summit of the hill of science, where the beauty of a vast region delights his extended vision, shall he remain forever at the bottom of the deep valley of ignorance, his view circumscribed on all sides, and the light of day shut out by impervious barriers? Let him rather ascend as high as he can, and gain all the light he can, and look forth as far as he can, over the boundless universe of God.

In a report recently made to the British Parliament, containing details of the testimony given before a committee by the proprietor of a manufacturing establishment on the continent, in which are employed from six to nine hundred workmen from the different nations of Europe, are found some interesting and instructive statements relating to the beneficial effects of popular education. As an abstract of this report is before the public, I will only state, in the briefest manner, the conclusions which may be drawn from it. It appears —

1st. That the operatives who are well educated, are more economical in their expenditures than the uneducated. While the former live well and save money, the latter live poorly, and spend all their wages.

2d. Though skill in any particular department of work, depends on experience and practical dexterity, the ability to conform to circumstances, and adapt themselves to new methods and new work, depends on the cultivation of the mind. In other words, the ignorant man can move without mistake only in the beaten track in which he has always walked; the educated can follow successfully any direction given him, and often is able to strike out a new path for himself. The former is a machine; the latter a thinking being.

3d. The educated have a self-respect, which induces them to avoid the vulgar habits and debasing pleasures of the ignorant, and seek to secure the esteem of the higher classes, and to elevate themselves in society. They have a sense of honor—a love of character—a regard for their reputation, which make them worthier citizens and better men.

4th. While the ignorant bring up their children in filth, idleness, vulgarity and profanity, a pest to themselves, and a nuisance to the neighborhood; the domestic establishments of the educated are cleanly, and their children neatly clothed, decent in their deportment, and well instructed.

Each of these statements might have been put into the form of a proposition, and demonstrated by reasoning. But facts are worth

more than arguments; and for that reason, I have presented the subject in this manner.

It may appear superfluous to say more in proof of the advantages which society derives from the liberal education of laboring men; but I beg your indulgence to the remark, that nearly all the inventions which have proved eminently useful, were made by men who combined studious habits with practical skill. James Watt, to whom the world is indebted for nearly all that is valuable and efficient in the steam-engine, though brought up in the occupation of mathematical instrument maker, devoted himself assiduously to the study of Natural Philosophy and the kindred sciences. Robert Fulton, who first applied the power of steam to navigation, while actively employed as machinist and civil engineer, became deeply learned in physics, chemistry, and the higher mathematics.— There is another example no less in point: In the year 1784, the son of a Massachusetts farmer, partly by the profits of his manual labor, and partly by teaching a village school, prepares himself for Yale College, in opposition to the wishes of his parents. With a resolution which neither poverty nor paternal resentment can shake, he falters not till he has accomplished the regular course of study. After graduating, he engages himself as a private tutor with a family in Georgia; but, on arriving in that state, he finds the place for which he had contracted, occupied by another. Destitute and without resources, he is kindly received into the mansion of a lady with whom he had become acquainted on the voyage. There, one day he hears a party of gentlemen remark, that “till ingenuity should devise some method to facilitate the separation of cotton from its seed, it was vain to think of raising the article for market.” The young man conceives an idea. Silently and alone, by day and by night, he broods over that thought, till by patient mental incubation, it assumes form and consistency. But the unsubstantial thought must now be wrought out into a material shape. The *idea* must become a *thing*. Month after month, with such tools as he had learned to use in boyhood, and others which his genius supplies to his wants, concealed from the gaze of men, he toils on. An intellect, matured by culture, presides in that cluttered and dusty apartment. The busy head and the busy hand work together. Awhile, and it is whispered in the community, that a machine is there with which one man can perform the labor of a hundred. The excited populace rush together, break open the mysterious room, and before the inventor has secured his patent, carry off the cotton gin. A hundred millions of dollars are at once added to the value of property in the south;

cotton becomes the great staple of the country; the price of clothing for the human race is every where diminished; the world is benefitted; and Eli Whitney, though unrewarded, is immortal.

Such are a few examples from the many which might be adduced, showing the advantage of combining study with labor. And it may be safely asserted, furthermore, that, if a man looks only to his pecuniary interests; if his object is "not to *live*, but to *get a living*;" there is no occupation or business whatever, in which the well educated will not, as a general remark, be more successful than the poorly educated. The laborious classes are not sufficiently impressed with this fact, and hence they are reluctant to avail themselves of the means of instruction which are placed within their reach. With good schools at their very doors, many rear their children in comparative ignorance. The young apprentice or journeyman, instead of devoting his pocket money and his leisure to books, too often squanders both in idle amusements, or vicious indulgences. The individual who is educated at all, in school or out, educates himself; and I hesitate not to say, that if every young farmer and mechanic would acquire a taste for reading, and a habit of thinking, and would employ his hours of leisure in the cultivation of his mind, he might become an intelligent man, even without an instructor.

Some years ago, in the town of Worcester, Mass. an apprentice was toiling from morning till night at the bellows and anvil. Yet in the eye that looked out from that dingy brow, an observer might have seen, that the fires of genius had been kindled in his soul. That boy reads. The money which others would have spent in folly, he expends in books. The hours which others waste in idleness or sleep, he devotes to study. A latin grammar falls into his hands. What can a blacksmith's boy, without a teacher, do with a latin grammar? Will he throw aside his hammer and study it? No; he studies it, and still wields his hammer. He becomes of age and begins business for himself; and *still he studies*. His progress is silent and unobserved, for he is unknown and poor. At length the rumor reaches the ears of a man of influence, that the blacksmith loves books. He sends him a key to the public library, and bids him go in and out at will. That key is more precious to him than gold; for it unlocks treasures which he deems far more valuable than shining dust. Year after year might he be seen in that library, poring at night over the pages of ancient and modern learning. Still, by day, the sound of his hammer is heard in his shop. He is none the worse blacksmith, because he is versed in fifty languages, and comprehends the profound analysis of La.

Place. About the close of the year 1840, a man is seen holding a crowded audience wrapt in attention, as with modest air and pleasing eloquence, he pours forth in faultless language, the intellectual wealth, which, by years of patient study, he has accumulated. He stands before the learned, the rich, the polished of the land, and instructs them. The name of the blacksmith has reached the Governor of the commonwealth; the Governor has mentioned him in a public address; and men and women are desirous to see and hear him. Is he elated and vain? Can he descend from that desk, amid plaudits of approbation, and resume the sledge? Fear not for him. True merit is modest. With cheerful content he retires from the gaze of men, to his anvil and his books.

But there is another and still stronger reason, why the education of the masses of our people should be brought up to a more liberal and elevated standard. The *masses* are the *sovereigns*. They are the fountain of all authority; the lawful possessors of the power of which the public officers are but the depositories. Our government is not only the exponent of the public will, but by its very nature, it also becomes the *instrument* of that will whose *creature* it is. But the public will is the resultant of individual wills; and its direction and force are determined by the character and intelligence of the majority. It may be expected, then, that whatever the great, leading characteristics of our people may be, the government, like a faithful mirror, will reflect them, in their beauty or deformity, to an admiring or disgusted world.

In despotic states, much care is taken that the young Princes be properly instructed, to prepare them to discharge the duty of monarchs. In like manner, it would be wise in us to take heed that they, whose suffrages elect our rulers, whose will gives character to the administration of affairs, and who are themselves eligible to the highest places in the Republic, be qualified by mental discipline, to assume the responsibilities and discharge the duties of American citizens.

There is a class of men, found in every section of our country, but more numerous in large towns and cities, and among the rude population of the frontier states, who, impelled by headlong passion, are ever ready to break over the restraints of law. Forgetting that the will of the people is the supreme law only when that will is legally expressed and legally executed, they hold the atrocious doctrine, that those who make the law are above the law; and that a large number may exercise, rashly and violently, the functions which a majority, acting deliberately through its constituted organs, can alone lawfully exercise. By them, law is shorn of its moral

power, and becomes the sport of violence; force, designed to sustain law, becomes the instrument of its overthrow; obedience, the only guaranty of freedom, is scouted as slavish and cowardly; and the courts of justice besieged, to wrest judgment by threats and clamor. Such men are the bone and sinew of mobs, the judges and executioners of lynch-law. Glorious sovereigns these, to wield the destinies of a mighty nation, and to impress upon its acts their hue and likeness!

There is another class, less brutal, but more dangerous. They are not stolidly ignorant, nor boastfully vulgar. They put on an air of pretension, lounge at places of public resort, and talk politics with as much assurance as statesmen. Eager to live without work, yet too poor to do so; clamorous for offices, yet incompetent to fill them; too lazy to study, too well dressed to beg, too proud to toil, they stand ever ready to become the corrupt instruments of corrupt men, "fit for treasons, stratagems and spoils." Keen to know when to crouch and when to insult,—they are devoted worshippers of "the star that rules the ascendant," and brave "to kick the dead lion." Patriotic as interest prompts, it is surprising how willing they are to serve the public.

They *love* their country, and like lovers linger
So long as she has *cash* for them to finger;
They *serve* their country, and, themselves to pay,
Purloin her gold, pack up, and run away.

There is still another class, less numerous than the last, but more violent and bold. A celebrated Jacobin of the French Revolution declared: "It is necessary to form the country anew, to change its ideas, its laws, and its manners; to change men and things, words and names; in a word, to destroy every thing, since every thing ought to be recreated." But the propensities of these men are still more destructive. They would destroy all, and recreate nothing. Not satisfied with demolishing the framework of society, they would tear up its foundations. They would have no law, no property, no families, no rights, no wrongs; but in the ferocious spirit of radical agrarianism, return to

"The good old rule, the simple plan,
That he may take who has the power,
That he may keep who can."

All these classes of men flourish where ignorance prevails, but languish in the light of popular intelligence. If liberty is in danger from either or all of them, education alone can avert the danger. They are diseases in the politic, which no homeopathy, with its "*similia similibus curantur*," can eradicate. Moral and political hydrophobia can never be cured by the virus that caused the mad-

ness. Popular ignorance and popular vice go hand in hand, leading on to licentiousness and degradation, imbecility and slavery. Both must be expelled together, by the combined power of science and religion, working to the same end, and producing that elevation of the national intellect and morals, in which a good popular education consists.

If we enquire for the cause of the decline and fall of the ancient republics, we shall find it in that corruption of public and private morals, which is the necessary consequence of popular ignorance. Poverty, indeed, may keep even an uninstructed people virtuous, hardy, and brave; but when wealth and luxury increase, the only conservative element against corruption, with its attendant effeminacy and consequent subjugation, is to be sought in the elevation of the popular mind. Lycurgus attempted to protect the stern, rude virtues of the Lacedemonians, by banishing riches from the State, and barring every avenue to luxury. Be ours the nobler task so to strengthen the moral and intellectual power of the people—that while they enjoy the blessings of wealth, they may escape its seductions. In this alone may we hope to secure the permanency of our institutions, and find the true dignity and glory of the Republic.

Two paths then are before us as a nation:—Ignorance and vice, intelligence and virtue. If we enter the one, we may run a violent and tumultuous career, attract for a while the gaze of an astonished world, and terrify mankind at last by the noise of our ruin, and the shock of our fall. If we take the other, we shall not win a momentary, but a lasting admiration; the foundations of national prosperity and individual happiness will be durable as time, strong as truth; our political system will have no insidious venom preying upon the springs of life,—no gangrene to be separated by the mutilation of the living parts,—no convulsions to distort,—no paralysis to prostrate; but all the organs animated by a healthy vitality, moving and acting together without jar or discord, like the movements and music of the spheres, till our nation shall become “a name and a praise in the whole earth.”

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 019 810 623 9